

31. Although my votes on rollcall Nos. 6 and 8 were registered, I was not registered as having voted on rollcall No. 7—the India earthquake sympathy resolution. I intended to vote “yea” on this resolution.

# INTRODUCTION OF THE DISABLED WORKERS OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2001

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today I join my colleague, Representative MATSUI and several other colleagues to introduce the “Disabled Workers Opportunity Act.” This bill will remove a persistent employment barrier facing people with disabilities—the fear of losing their health insurance. It builds on the Work Incentives Improvement and Ticket to Work Act enacted last year. That law extended Medicare coverage for disabled, working beneficiaries who qualify for SSDI for eight and a half years. The legislation we are introducing today would make Medicare coverage permanent for these workers.

According to a recent survey commissioned by the National Organization on Disability, 79% of unemployed people with disabilities want to work. Yet, only one-third of them are actively working. Despite major advances in disability services and technologies, less than 1% of SSI/SSDI disability enrollees leave the rolls each year to return to work. In large part, this gap can be explained by the fact that SSI/SSDI disability beneficiaries risk losing health insurance coverage if they return to work—and many jobs lack the health benefits they require to maintain employment. Health insurance is vital for all workers, but for someone who is disabled, it can be a matter of life or death.

On December 17, 1999, the “Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act” was signed into law (P.L. 106–170). This important piece of legislation extended and improved healthcare and vocational rehabilitation opportunities for people with disabilities. Yet it does not go far enough in one fundamental respect. Instead of allowing disabled workers to permanently retain access to Medicare, people with disabilities who have worked a total of 8.5 years (whether consecutive or not) will still lose their Medicare benefits under existing law.

While 8.5 years may sound like a sufficient transition period, let’s not forget an important fact—managing a physical or mental disability is often a lifelong process. Someone with a spinal cord injury or a serious mental illness can face health challenges and vulnerabilities throughout their lives. The original version of the Work Incentives bill—as introduced in the House with bi-partisan support—recognized this fact and extended Medicare coverage permanently.

Our legislation would improve the Ticket-to-Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act by making Medicare Part A coverage permanent for disabled, working beneficiaries who qualify for SSDI. This small but critical fix will help remove an ongoing barrier facing disabled workers—the threat of losing healthcare coverage after returning to work. It is time to give our

disabled workers the opportunity to succeed by providing permanent Medical coverage. Enacting this legislation will allow the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act to live up to its name and really make it possible for those on SSDI to become permanent, active members of the workforce.

Last week, President Bush announced his “New Freedom Initiative” which shares the same goal as our disabled workers bill—to help people with disabilities becoming working members of our community. I look forward to working with President Bush and my Congressional colleagues to pass this small, but important piece of legislation that would make a real difference in the lives of those people on SSDI who are able and willing to remain in our workforce. I submit the following co-sponsor listing as well as a letter from the Consortium for “Citizens With Disabilities” into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The full list of original co-sponsors is as follows:

1. Mr. Stark.
2. Mr. Matsui.
3. Ms. Morella.
4. Mr. Rangel.
5. Mr. Lewis of Georgia.
6. Mr. Cardin.
7. Mr. Coyne.
8. Mr. Doggett.
9. Ms. Thurman.
10. Mr. Jefferson.
11. Mr. McNulty.
12. Mr. Waxman.
13. Mr. Bonior.
14. Mr. Kucinich.
15. Mr. Frost.
16. Mr. Murtha.
17. Mr. Holden.
18. Mr. Frank.
19. Mr. Kildee.
20. Mr. Hilliard.
21. Ms. McCarthy of Missouri.
22. Mr. Berman.
23. Mr. Allen.
24. Mr. Hinchey.
25. Mr. Baird.
26. Mr. Green.
27. Ms. Christensen.
28. Mr. Lantos.
29. Mr. George Miller of California.
30. Ms. Baldwin.
31. Mr. Abercrombie.
32. Mr. McDermott.
33. Mr. Rush.

A letter of support from the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities follows:

CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES,  
*February 5, 2001.*

Hon. PETE STARK,  
*Cannon House Office Building,  
Washington, DC.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN STARK, The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Work Incentives and Social Security Task Forces are pleased to support your legislation that allows for Social Security Disability beneficiaries who go back to work to permanently retain their Medicare coverage.

As you know, the lack of quality affordable health care is one of the largest barriers facing disabled beneficiaries who want to work. Witnesses with disabilities have testified before the House Ways and Means and Commerce Committees and the Senate Finance Committee that the loss of healthcare or the inability to afford healthcare because of lim-

ited incomes prevents them from working. In addition, we know that this fear keeps people on the rolls who might try to go back to work simply because they might lose their healthcare coverage. This is wrong and it must be changed.

Congress and the President went to great lengths to remedy this problem with P.L. 106–170, The Ticket-to-Work & Work Incentives Improvement Act. This law improves access to rehabilitation services, eliminates many disincentives to work with SSA, and extends Medicaid and Medicare coverage for those who work.

Unfortunately, during last minute consideration of the bill, a limit was imposed on the Medicare coverage despite the fact that 249 members of the House and 79 Senators co-sponsored legislation that provided permanent coverage under Medicare.

We believe that this limit must be lifted so that beneficiaries can work without the fear that one day they will be left with the choice of either working without coverage or being forced back onto the disability rolls. That’s not fair and it’s not right. We urge Congress to support and pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

American Association on Mental Retardation.

American Association of University Affiliated Programs.

American Congress of Community Supports and Employment Services.

American Council of the Blind.

American Network of Community Options and Resources.

Association for Persons in Supported Employment.

Brain Injury Association.

Inter-National Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation.

International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services.

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

National Association of Developmental Disabilities Councils.

National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems.

National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare.

National Down Syndrome Congress.

National Mental Health Association.

National Organization of Social Security Claimants’ Representatives.

NISH.

Paralyzed Veterans of America.

The Arc of the United States.

United Cerebral Palsy.

## TRIBUTE TO BILL AND CLAUDIA COLEMAN

**HON. MARK UDALL**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I wish to honor Bill and Claudia Coleman for donating the largest gift ever given an American public university—\$250 million—to the University of Colorado to be used to fund advanced research and development of innovative technologies to enhance the lives of people with cognitive disabilities.

Today, approximately 20 million persons, or 7 percent of the U.S. population experience significant cognitive disabilities, such as mental retardation, autism, severe and persistent mental illness, traumatic brain injury, stroke, and Alzheimer’s disease.

Based on the Coleman’s generous donation, the University of Colorado will establish the

Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities. The Institute will focus on education, research, and the development of new technology and software programs to improve the quality of life for the cognitively disabled.

The Coleman Institute at the University of Colorado, which will include all four campuses of the University, will help bring together many areas of engineering, medical and biomedical, clinical and brain research necessary to make a significant advance in understanding cognitive disabilities and developing future generations of assistive technology devices.

I commend University of Colorado President Elizabeth Hoffman for her vision in making the Coleman Institute the international center of excellence in developing adaptive assistive technologies, based on advanced biomedical and computer science research, for people with cognitive disabilities.

This unprecedented gift is a tribute to the Colemans' generosity and vision, as well as to the University's growing reputation for work in developmental disabilities and assistive technology.

I am proud to represent the University of Colorado's Boulder campus, and I look forward to aiding the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities in realizing Bill and Claudia Coleman's worthy goal.

#### HONORING THE 2001 BEA CHRISTY AWARD NOMINEES

#### HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2001 Bea Christy Award Nominees, who will be honored Friday, February 9, 2001 in Lansing, Michigan for their contributions to improve their communities and neighborhoods.

Bea Christy was a dedicated member of the Eastside Neighborhood Organization for more than ten years until her death. She also worked with other organizations to make the neighborhood and community a better place to live. She was the kind of individual who volunteered to do the "unglamorous" tasks, who worked quietly and diligently behind the scenes, who never sought recognition for her efforts.

First, she was a good neighbor in her immediate neighborhood, welcoming new people, planting flowers in the church yard across the street from her house, taking elderly folks to the doctor, and noticing where the sidewalk needed repairs. She also helped edit and deliver the Eastside Neighborhood Organization newspaper, made soup for the annual fundraiser, and helped plant flowers in the bed on Michigan Avenue.

Bea was also an active member of her church, volunteered with Radio Talking Book, as well as helped to initiate the Lansing area CROP Walk. She made these contributions in addition to being a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother.

It is quiet, committed, unsung people like Bea who make neighborhood organizations successful, and the community as a whole a better place to live. It is in this spirit that individuals are nominated for an annual award exemplifying the qualities of Bea Christy. The fol-

lowing six criteria must be considered when making a nomination for the Bea Christy Award: variety of activities in your neighborhood organization; unsung nature of contributions; overall good neighbor; reliability; willingness to take on tasks; and, other service to the community.

Friday night, ten deserving individuals will be recognized as 2001 Bea Christy Award Nominees. I salute the following nominees for their outstanding service to their communities and neighborhoods: Dr. Calvin C. Anderson, Northwest Neighborhood Alliance; Chris Bobier, Potter/Walsh Neighborhood Association; Linda Hartman, River Forest Neighborhood Association; Chad Hutchison, Downtown Neighborhood Association; Denise Kelley, Association for the Bingham Community; Rick Kibbey, Eastside Neighborhood Organization; Antonia Miernik, Genesee Neighborhood Association; Kathy Rogers, Old Forest Neighborhood Association; Leonard Earl Salisbury, Hosmer Neighborhood Organization; and Jane Sawyers, Neighbors United in Action.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE HOUSING PRESERVATION MATCHING GRANT ACT OF 2001

#### HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Housing Preservation Matching Grant Act of 2001 previously championed by our esteemed colleague, the late Representative Bruce Vento.

With the recent rise in real estate prices, many owners of HUD-assisted and insured projects are finding it more lucrative to repay their mortgages and operate their buildings in the private market. The tendency to opt-out of Section 8 contracts is placing hundreds of thousands of affordable housing units at risk. According to the National Housing Trust, there are over half a million Section 8 apartments in all 50 states that are below market and in danger of losing affordability. We simply cannot allow this vital housing stock to evaporate.

The Housing Preservation Matching Grant Act would provide assistance to states for operating costs, capital expenditures, debt restructuring, and acquisition of projects with HUD-insured mortgages, Section 8 contracts, and resident ownership. This project-based assistance is a necessary complement to tenant-based approaches by preserving the units that accept vouchers, and ensuring that low-income families have a safe and affordable place to live. Federal matching grants would also give states a much needed incentive to either continue or create innovative programs to preserve their housing resources.

Before we can create new affordable housing we must preserve the resources we already have, and stop the rising tide of low-income rents to the private market. This legislation achieves both these goals, and hopefully will entice states to appropriate more money for public housing programs knowing that the federal government will provide a substantial share of the cost. By setting up a mechanism for federal and state partnership, this legislation fosters cooperation and coordination between all those responsible for administering and maintaining housing programs.

Mr. Speaker, the Housing Preservation Matching Grant Act of 2001 is an important part of any broader strategy to save affordable housing, and I ask all my colleagues to support it.

#### THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

#### HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, this month is the 57th anniversary of one of the most heart touching incidents of World War II, the coverage of the four chaplains.

We are fortunate in that we are living in an era when the sacrifices of what is now called "The Greatest Generation" are finally being fully appreciated. The release of recent films and books, the groundbreaking last Veterans Day for the official World War Two Memorial, and other historic events, are underscoring for younger generations the magnitude of the commitment of all the American people to their task at hand in World War Two.

However, of the countless incidents of heroism during that conflict, none have the emotional impact or the relevance to today's society as the story of the four chaplains.

It is now 57 years since that fateful night of February 3, 1943, when four brave chaplains—George I. Fox and Clark V. Poling, Protestant ministers; Alexander D. Goode, a Rabbi; and John P. Washington, a Roman Catholic Priest—laid down their lives aboard the U.S.S. *Dorchester* so that others might live on.

The *Dorchester*, carrying 902 servicemen, merchant seamen, and civilian workers, was traveling across the North Atlantic, towards a U.S. Army base on the coast of Greenland, when it was attacked by a German U-boat. The German submarine fired a series of torpedoes toward the *Dorchester*, which struck the transport ship well below the water line, and injuring her beyond repair.

As water began to flood in through the ship's battered hull, chaos set in aboard the *Dorchester*, and it was into the ensuing scene of utter hopelessness and despair that the Chaplains' legacy was woven.

When it was discovered that the supply of life jackets aboard the *Dorchester* was insufficient, the Chaplains—without hesitation—removed their own, and offered them to four frightened young men.

The Chaplains then stayed with those injured by the initial blast as the ship slanted towards the icy water, and were last seen clutching hands together, offering prayers for those around them.

The qualities which the Chaplains embodied—self sacrifice, unity, faith, and respect for each other's creeds—are the qualities upon which our nation rests, and which, at the dawn of the new millennium, are relevant for us today more than ever. It is for this reason that the Four Chaplains deserve our respect and our honor as true American heroes.

As we pay homage to the Four Chaplains today and throughout this month, let us reflect for a moment upon the attributes which defined their actions, and forget not those four heroic men. The uniquely American brand of